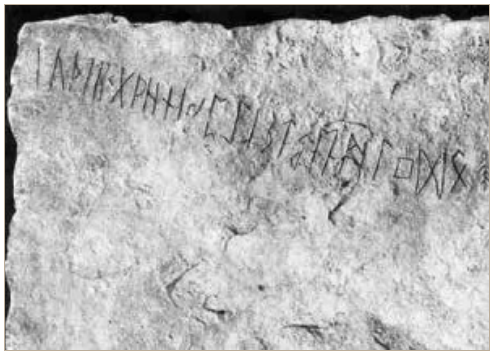
The Mystery of the FUTHARK Alphabet

The following study was written by Mr. Turgay Kürüm and is used by kind permission. The footnotes are at the end of the article and are the author's own. This study is originally published at the following URL: ***http://www.antalya-ws.com/futhark/index.htm*** *See also:* ***www.kuzeyipekyolu.com***



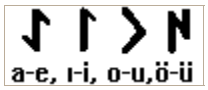
The **Futhark** alphabet was used by the North European Germanic peoples (the Swedish, Norwegian and Danish) between the 3rd and 17th centuries A.D. About 3500 stone monuments in Europe, concentrated mostly in Sweden and Norway, are claimed to have been inscribed with this writing.

The purpose of this article is to draw the readers' attention to the fact that this Futhark alphabet, which is also called the **Runic** (1) stemmed from the very same origin as did the ancient **Turkish** (2) inscriptions with **Göktürk** (3) alphabet.The article is concerned solely with reading the alphabet known as "the primitive futhark", found inscribed on a rock in Kylver on Gotland Island, Sweden, in addition to the other two stone monuments, namely the Mojbro stone in Uppland, and the Istaby stone in Blekinge, with their photographs available, and which are considered to belong to the group classified as the oldest runic inscriptions, by matching their characters with those in the Göktürk inscriptions, and thus being able to decipher them in Turkish. Further ideas, interpretations and opinions in relation to this particular subject shall not be treated within this article. I suggest that more interested readers should get in touch with us directly.

I would like to emphasize the point that I am not advocating any claim on these texts being written in the Göktürk script or vice versa. My claim is that the alphabets of these monuments found in both Europe and Central Asia have stemmed from a common origin in a very remote past. Then, it was only a natural development for the Turkish, and the Germanic tribes that, although in locations so far away from each other, they could seperately carry on with this heritage of writing. I hold the belief that I have been able to prove the claim summarized above **by reading the monuments written in Futhark alphabet, or the Oldest Runic, in Turkish through the help of the Göktürk alphabet.** The result submitted to your reading here is just a small part of a greater research that has been going on for the past several years (4).

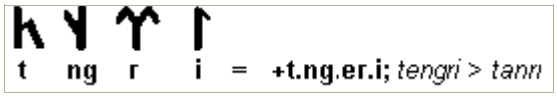
The **Orhun** (5) monuments were discovered by a Swedish officer named Strahlenberg, and his finding was made known by publications in 1730. In 1893, the Danish scholar Thomsen was able to decipher these inscriptions and declare that they were written in Turkish (6).The monuments of **Kultigin** and **Bilge Kagan**, situated near the Kosho-Tsaydam lake in the Orhun River valley to the south of the Lake Baykal, and that of **Sage Tonyukuk**, the Deputy-Khan (7) a little farther, are the three important memorials which make up what is known in general as the Orhun Monuments. The inscription used on them consists 38 characters. Numerous stone monuments are also found around the Yenisei River, but they belong to a period much earlier than that of the Orhun pieces, and there are in excess of 150 Skyturkish character-forms used on. The ancient Turkish script was written vertically with the lines running from top left downwards to the bottom right, and read accordingly, that is from right to left when the text is laid down on its right side. The individual

marks are not joined, and the full or partial sentences are seperated with a column mark “:” in between.



The eight vowel sounds of Turkish, are represented in couples by 4 marks, and they usually are not employed in the beginning and the middle syllables of a word, but are shown in the last syllable, or if they occur at the end. For example:

a ferocious bull, or a fire-breathing dragon (8).



The “god”, or “a deity”.

As for the **Futhark** alphabet employed on the stones found in Sweden, the monuments bearing this inscription are studied in two main chapters in Prof.Jansson’s study: a) The oldest runic inscriptions b) The 16-rune Futhark and Runic inscriptions from the Viking Age. **The oldest runic inscriptions** are written with an alphabet of 24 characters (9).The chapter, from pages 9 to 24, in Prof.Jansson’s book of 185 pages is devoted to this particular period. The three stone inscriptions which are mentioned in this part are:

– The stone from **Kylver** farm in Stånga (Gotland). This is the oldest relic found in Sweden, dating back to the fifth century. (p.13)

– The **Möjbro** stone from Uppland. (p.18)

- The **Istaby** stone from Blekinge. (p.21)
-

Although these three monuments are declared as not deciphered yet, the author is attempting at some unfounded assumptions in relation to their contents. According to the map supplied at the end of this book, there happens to be numerous stones, which are inscribed with the same alphabet and belong to the same period of history, in more than 70 locations in the north and northwest of Europe. (Appendix A). In this article, the decipherment of the three stones mentioned above is accounted.

The monuments considered to be in the 16-rune futhark group belong to a later period called **the Viking Age** which started at about AD. 800. During this period, the 24-characters of **the Primitive Norse** runes became simplified and reduced to 16-rune series.The pages 25-30 and the rest of the book in Jansson's study are allocated to this subject which is beyond the concern of my article.

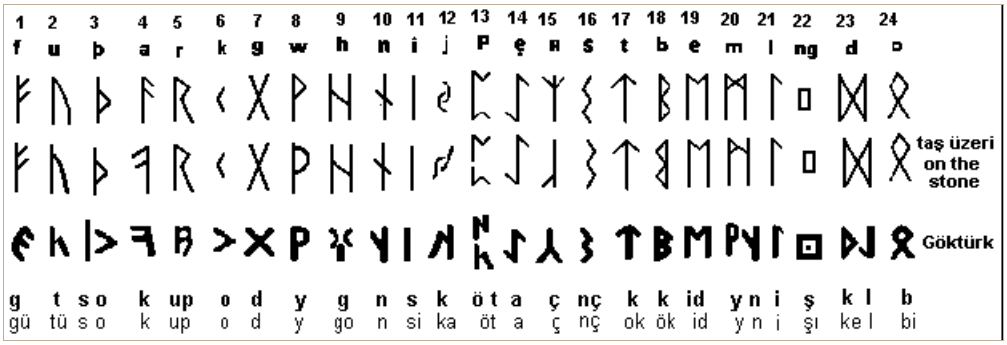
The European scholars have come to recognize from the very beginning the obvious similarity between the character forms of the Primitive Norse stones and those of the Central Asian Göktürk monuments, but for certain various reasons have refrained from tackling this point by denying all kinds of plausible relations. All throughout the period of 160 years that elapsed between the years of 1730 and 1893, that is between the discovery of Orhun monuments and their definitely final decipherment, fanciful theories were fabricated about the Vikings' (or Indo-Germans', or Celts', or Goths') prehistoric emigrations into Central Asia, and the erection of Orhun stones as landmarks of their presence and civilization dating back to several thousands of years BC in that region. Only when in 1893, it was understood that these inscriptions were not written in any other tongue but pure Turkish, then those fanciful theories were discarded, and the proposed pre-historic datings were revised to be not earlier than AD 700. Even today, a number of academicians are still straining at finding a Sogdian, Persian or Aramaic origin for Turkish inscriptions, but their efforts at proving their claims all end in vain. A casual comparision of ancient scripts is all needed to see that the characters used in Orhun monuments are more identical with the futhark than any of those alleged originals. Besides this close resemblance, it is an exciting fact that *the Primitive Norse runes declared to have ambiguous contexts can be rendered meaningfully when they are exposed to our novel method of reading ancient Turkish scripts.*

As I have remarked at the beginning of this article, it must be kept in mind that the ancient Turkish script used in Central Asia and the Primitive Norse futhark in Europe, as well as those other scripts mentioned in passing above, have all stemmed from a common origin in a very remote past. Then, the Turkish, Germanic, and other tribes have independently relied on this common legacy of writing for the monuments in their own tongues.
The stone from **Kylver** farm in Stånga (Gotland).

Now, we can take a closer look at the photograph supplied on page 13 in Prof. Jansson's book: The whole Primitive Norse rune-row is recorded on a stone, used as a side-slab in a sarcophagus, and found in **Kylver** farm in Gotland.

The Primitive Norse futhark.

Since the characters from the 1st to the 6th spell out **futhark**, this word is used to denote the runic script. However, some characters are cut slightly different on the stone than what is shown within the text above:


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24
f u þ a r k g w h n i j P ę ʀ s t b e m l ng d o
taş üzeri on the stone
Göktürk
g t so k up o d y g n s k öt a ç nç k k id y n i ş k l b
gü tü so k up o d y go n si ka öt a ç nç ok ök id y n i şı ke l bi

An identical form of the futhark character shown under #23 is also found in the Tonyukuk inscription, and commented upon on page 149 in Prof.Ergin's book, although it is not given in the main list of symbols. In this book, it is stated to mean "head". But for me, it signifies **k+l.** kel kelle, which is a synonim for the same word, and a composite form of these two distinct characters.

The same thing can be said for the character #13: It is a composite form of the symbols meaning (to) talk, (to) speak in English. It is also interesting if we consider the form as a pictoglyph of an open mouth.

ö+t > *öt, öt(mek)*

Now, I shall venture to read this 24-character rune row, from right to left, by applying the rules of reading Göktürk inscriptions:

bilke ış inydi ök oknça öt akisn goydo pu oksütüg

bilke	*wise man, sage; one of wisdom*
ış	*light; light of wisdom, knowledge*
inydi	*arrived / descended (from the sky)*
ök	*himself, his own self*
oknça	*with the (pointed) tip*
öt	*to speak (as the birds chirp)*
aksin	*through his mouth (the words he uttered)*
goydo	*he put (by carving); he carved*
pu	*this*
oksütüg	*column; erected slab of stone*

The meaning obtained thru reading the above piece, as if it were written in ancient Turkish, can roughly be rendered in today's English as follows: **The light of wisdom arrived/descended, he himself carved onto this erect stone, with (the pointed tip of) his arrow/dagger, the words he uttered/spoke through his own mouth.**

I shall refrain from venturing into any philological or philosophical interpretations here. But, I would like to draw your attention to the emergence of the word **O.d.ng**, when the characters numbered 24, 23, 22 are considered in their runic namesakes. In the Scandinavian mythology, it was **Odin**, the Norse God who brought the gift of divine script to mankind. Then, the very name of the god in these three symbols read out as the light of wisdom (alias the divine reason), or the sage/lord of light in ancient Turkish… The readers further interested in this subject should get in touch with me.

The **Möjbro** stone from Uppland, which is a memorial monument:

In this script, our attention is drawn to the placement of some characters backwards. Especially, the rune **R**, read as “op”, is peculiar. For this reason, I have read it as “po”. Reading from right to left, starting with the bottom line:

gopek yik op ke kelkic ikin ekgök göksüpek desinkic

gopek	*dog*
yik	*well*
op ke	*to attack; to charge*
kelkic	*undertake (or) achieve*
ikin	*both; both of them*
ekgök	*mother-sky: a sacred sky-spirit; mother nature (or) goddess of sky*
göksüpek	*bold; brave (or) courageous*
desinkiç	*to say, to state; to acknowledge*

The meaning obtained thru reading the above piece, as if it were written in ancient Turkish, can roughly be rendered in today’s English as follows: **(May both of) the dog(s) charge well; so that the sacred sky-spirit acknowledges their boldness..**

On this stone, under the inscription, there is a carving of a rider on his horse, holding up a round shield in his left hand while brandishing his weapon in his right. There are two dogs running beside the horse, as if all of them are engaged in an attack.

Also, the writing style of the symbols and the density of symbols, means the less character spacing, on the left corner, proves the original writing style was from right to left.

The **Istaby** stone from Blekinge, which was carved in the transition period between the Primitive Norse period and Viking Age:

on the stone
Göktürkçe
g r so t y t i k g iç g r ıd upt y t i k g s iç r g k k iç g r upsy t i k g k
g r so t yat i ki g iç go r ıd up t ya t i ki g sü iç r gü k ko iç gu r upsyat i ki g kö

Reading the inscription from right to left:

ök gikit yaspurgu içok güriç sü gikit yatpudır goiç gikit yatsorg

ök	*he, his own self*
gikit	*brave*
yaspurgu	*lived*
içok	*much, many*
güriç	*forte; force(ful); hard(ship)*
sü	*army, soldiers*
yatpudır	*committed not*
goiç	*flight; migration*
yatsorg	*lies (herein)*

he (who was) brave (and) lived through many hardships (of) army, committed not flight (or did not desert his post of duty) lies herein…

Truly a fitting epitaph for a soul who endured much in his wordly life.

My deciphering ends here, because the photographs of only these three stones are supplied within the chapter titled “The Oldest Runic Inscriptions” in Prof. Jansson’s book. In conclusion, I admit that I might have made some minor mistakes and errors in my treatment of the subject. However, I hold the opinion that these stones do contain the messages of similar meanings in more or less the same way as I have striven to put forward. My purpose is to initiate a new interest in this ancient inscriptions and be of help in starting up a fresh discussion in regard to their contents. For this reason, I have not dwelt on speculative interpretations, but wanted to remark that the Primitive Norse futhark or the rune alphabet have stemmed from a much older common origin as that of the Göktürks.

January 1994 Turgay Kürüm

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Footnotes

(1) **Runic:** Described as the secret or magic writing, believed to have been delivered to mankind by Odin, the Norse God.

(2) **Turk:** The noun now designates the peoples of certain nations. On the *Orkh'n* monuments in C.Asia, this word was spelt in ancient script as **t.ü.r.°k**. Since each mark originally had a syllabic value, the vowels were usually not shown at the beginning and the middle of the writing, except in certain cases. Therefore, in our opinion, the correct rendering (as per the works cited in our Footnote #4 below) is to be **et.ür.ek** and **öt.ür.ük,** meaning both the *flesh-born-beings / race(s),* and *singing/chirping beings (able to communicate like birds) / race(s),* at the same time.

(3) **Göktürk:** The noun **Sky-turk(s)**, in which the adjectives of **Blue, Root** and **East** are also denoted as well as the Sky, designated a far-flung confederative empire of Turkish and allied nations in historical times between c. 300 BC. and 500 AD., following the demise of Huns and the Hunnish Empire. Apart from the historical facts associated with Sky-turks, we are of the opinion that this noun dates back to much remoter times in prehistory. In its conceptual form, the word is a crasis of the syllables: **Gök*köG:eT.ür.ek / öT.ür.ük**, meaning the *Sky*rooT beings / race(s) which originated in and descended from the Blue / Sky,* in addition to what was explained for the word **Turk** in Footnote #3 above.

(4) This research is initiated by **Doğan Türker**, whose method helped me define my approach in this article. His original papers can be accessed at the State National Library, Ankara, under the titles "**Gök*köG Ana Dil'e Doğru Bakış (**A Correct View on the Sky*rooT Mother Tongue**), No.1993/4.4029**" and "**Gök*köG Bitşik (**The Book of Sky*rooT United**), No.1993/4.4030**". Another work in English by **Doğan Türker**, a lexicon disclosing the Turkish roots of certain English and European words, and concepts, such as ökonomie/economy, is his "**Some Notes on the Sky*rooT Fl(a/e)sh-Born Mother Tongue, No.1993/4.4031**".

(5) **Orhun:** Variably spelt as Orhun, Orkun, or Orkhun, and considered to be simply the place name in discussion, actually contains in its two syllables a triple reading and meaning respectively. Please refer to the works cited in Footenote #4.

(6) We are of the opinion that there are quite a number of misreadings and errors in the interpretations of these ancient Turkish texts, but we refrain from entering any discussions here for the simple reason that they are the subject matter of another article.

(7) **Tonyukuk:** The word written as **t. o. yn. k. k.** is believed to stand for the name of a Sage, who is presumed to have been raised in China, and then progressed to fill the rank of Royal Counsel and Deputy-Khan, is, according to **Türker,** a wrong deduction based on misreading these consonnant marks and mixing it with some historical but unrelated records found in the Chinese annals**.** His radical reconstruction of reading these marks as **otu. yan. ık. ok.**, meaning in English *the flaming-arrow*, signifies the legendary leader who brought **the fire** and the other basics of civilization to the primitives on earth. Türker remarks that *otuyanıkok* also stands for the alter name of **ap.er.am : ot/at.oğh.us**, too well known in the Greek fable as *Titan Prometheus*, which in fact is a corrupted reading of this original Turkish wording. Türker maintains that confusing the legendary heroes of the sagas with the historical characters mentioned in the latter-day records is a gross mistake on part of the historians concerned, if not deliberately an act of "uprooting the legacy of **Turqu-oise** Gods".

(8) According to **Türker**, the word *Tabğaç*, believed to stand for the name of China in ancient Turkish, is also a misnomer based on a misreading of the consonnant marks **t. b. ğ. ç**. His radical reconstruction of reading these marks is **ot.ob.oğh.-aç**; *otboğaç,* which signifies a herbi- (or carni-) vorous dinosaur, appropriately depicted as a fire-breathing dragon in the legends of old, and the reasons for its being treated as such are explained in his aforementioned works.

(9) The character-symbols of this alphabet are reproduced under the entry **Rün** and **Rünik** in *Büyük Larousse* encycloped- ia,page 10000, volume 19. Since the 13th character printed there is wrong, its correct form is also shown in our article.

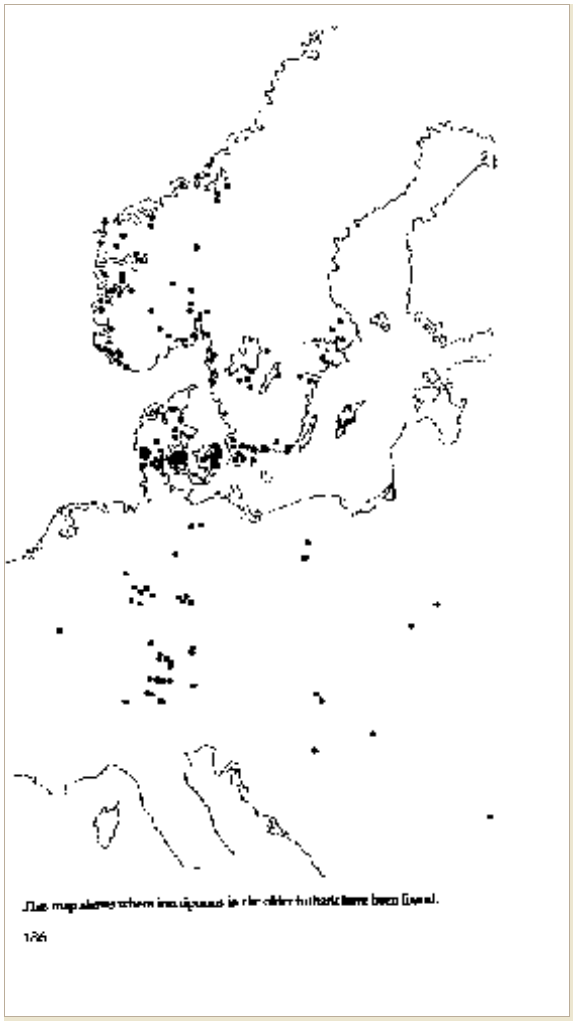
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ergin, Prof. Muharrem, Orhun Abideleri; Bogazici Yayinlari, Istanbul, Turkiye 1988. More specific information on the Göktürks and their inscription is accessible in Prof. Ergin's concise book.

Jansson, Prof. Sven B.F., Runes in Sweden; translated by Peter Foote, Gidlunds, Varnamo, Sweden 1987. (English edition of Runinskrifter i Sverige, AWE/Gebers 1963). The photographs of the stone monuments in Sweden (Appendix A) are provided in Prof. Jansson's book. The inscriptions are clearly legible in these photographs.

Buyuk Larousse, Interpress-Milliyet, Istanbul,Turkiye 1993; The Turkish edition of Grand Dictionnaire Encyclopedique, Larousse (GDEL), Paris, France. The Göktürk alphabet used in this article is taken from the encyclopedia's entry **Gokturkce** on page 4678, vol. 9. (Appendices B and C).

APPENDIX A



Archaeological locations of runic script in Northern Europe

APPENDIX B

ORHON		YENİSEY	Ses değeri Phonetics value	
Klasik Classic	Başka Şekiller Other figures			
𐰀	𐰁	𐰀 𐰁 𐰂 𐰃	a , e	a > back vowel e > front vowel
𐰄		𐰄	kapalı e	Mouth is close - é -
𐰇	𐰈	𐰇 𐰈 𐰉 𐰊	ı , i	ı > back vowel i > front vowel
𐰆	𐰅 𐰆	𐰆 𐰅 𐰋	o , u	back vowel
𐰍	𐰌 𐰎 𐰏	𐰌 𐰍 𐰎	ö , ü	front vowel
𐰃	𐰃	𐰃 𐰋 𐰆 𐰅	y (kalın ünlülerle)	with back vowel
𐰉	𐰉	𐰉 𐰊 𐰌 𐰍	y (ince ünlülerle)	with front vowel
𐰋	𐰐 𐰑 𐰒	𐰋 𐰓 𐰔 𐰕 𐰖	b (kalın ünlülerle)	with back vowel
𐰘	𐰘 𐰙 𐰚 𐰛	𐰘 𐰙 𐰛	b (ince ünlülerle)	with front vowel
𐰞	𐰞	𐰞 𐰟	-ç , -c (sözcük sonu)	end of the word
𐰠		𐰠	iç , ic	
𐰢		𐰢 𐰣 𐰤	d (kalın ünlülerle)	with back vowel
𐰴	𐰴	𐰴 𐰴	d (ince ünlülerle)	with front vowel
𐰍	𐰍	𐰍 𐰌 𐰎 𐰏	g (kalın ünlülerle)	with back vowel
𐰍	𐰍	𐰍 𐰍 𐰍 𐰍 𐰍	g (ince ünlülerle)	with front vowel
𐰴	𐰴 𐰴	𐰴 𐰴 𐰴 𐰴	k (e , i ile)	with e,i
𐰴	𐰴	𐰴 𐰴	k (ö , ü ile)	with ö,ü
𐰴	𐰴	𐰴 𐰴 𐰴	k (a ile)	with a
𐰴	𐰴 𐰴	𐰴 𐰴	k (ı ile)	with ı
𐰴		𐰴 𐰴	k (o , u ile)	with o,u
𐰜		𐰜 𐰜 𐰜	L (kalın ünlülerle)	with back vowel

Orhon runic script

APPENDIX C

ORHON		YENİSEY	Ses değeri Phonetics value
Klasik Classic	Başka Şekiller Other figures		
𐰴	𐰵	𐰴 𐰶	L (ince ünlülerle) with front vowel
𐰢		𐰢	-ıt , -id (sözcük sonu) end of the word
𐰣	𐰣 𐰤	𐰣 𐰤 𐰥	-m (sözcük sonu) end of the word
𐰭		𐰭	n (kalın ünlülerle) with back vowel
𐰤	𐰦	𐰤 𐰧 𐰨 𐰩 𐰪	n (ince ünlülerle) with front vowel
𐰸		𐰸 𐰹	-n (ard damak n si - sözcük sonu) end of the word
𐰺	𐰻	𐰺 𐰼	-ny (ön damak n si - sözcük sonu) end of the word
𐰽	𐰾 𐰽	𐰽 𐰾 𐰿 𐱀	-nç , -nc (sözcük sonu) end of the word
𐰯	𐰯	𐰯 𐰰	-nt , -nd (sözcük sonu) end of the word
𐰃		𐰃 𐰄	-p (sözcük sonu) end of the word
	𐰅𐰾		op , up
𐰼		𐰼 𐰽 𐰾 𐰿	r (kalın ünlülerle) with back vowel
𐰺	𐰺 𐰻 𐰼	𐰺 𐰻	r (ince ünlülerle) with front vowel
𐰖	𐰖 𐰗 𐰘	𐰖 𐰗 𐰘	s (kalın ünlülerle) with back vowel
𐰖	𐰖	𐰖	s (ince ünlülerle) with front vowel
𐰚	𐰚 𐰛 𐰜	𐰚 𐰛 𐰜 𐰝	-ş (sözcük sonu) end of the word
𐰉	𐰉 𐰊 𐰋	𐰉 𐰊 𐰋	t (kalın ünlülerle) with back vowel
	𐰍		ot , ut
𐰓		𐰓 𐰔 𐰕	t (ince ünlülerle) with front vowel
𐰇	𐰇 𐰈	𐰇 𐰈 𐰉	-z (sözcük sonu) end of the word
:		:	sözcük ayırma işareti separate two words

Orhon runic script

ADDENDUM by Kartavirya

To those who are interested in more information along these lines, I recommend the following DNA study detailing the likelihood of a genetic connection between present-day Scandinavians and Central Asians:

R-M17 SCANDINAVIAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN PROPOSED GENETIC CONNECTION